

Runowamae from Nonsense

Music by Paul John Rudoi (b. 1985)

Overtone Singing

One of the vocal techniques in this piece is overtone singing. Here are the instructions from the octavo:

- For overtone singing passages, individually shift to different vowels and harmonics. To do this, say and hold the letter R, then purse the lips into an [u] shape to make different vowels and harmonics.¹

Recordings

Carteret High School Choir, 2019: https://youtu.be/4_19jvrMdg

Publisher provided recording: <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&type=audio&productID=10849147>

From the composer's SoundCloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/pauljohnrudoi/runowamae>

Background

Paul John Rudoi's *Runowamae* uses syncopated rhythms, sustained vowels and overtone singing to create an interesting and engaging soundscape. *Runowamae* is the second composition in his NONSENSE living set.

The only common thread is nonsense, literally. I begin each piece by finding a grouping of syllables that roll off the tongue a certain way, and I expand the way they interact with one another into a work. That and I wanted to be able to have fun writing... I was taking myself and my work a little too seriously four years ago and wrote *Miniyama Nayo* as a response to that. I've been hooked on fun/quirky ever since.²

In reference to his musical style, Rudoi states:

My music is governed by the texts I choose to set, their spoken rhythms and contour influencing all aspects of the music I compose. I begin with initial diagrams based on syllables, vocal shapes, consonant clusters, and climaxes within the poetic line. I then create melodies derived from the expansion of each line's spoken contour. From these melodies I create my harmonic and

¹ Rudoi, Paul John. *Runowamae*. Walton Music, 2018, 2.

² Rudoi, Paul John. Email to Elizabeth Pauly, 26 June 2019.

rhythmic structures which I then merge with the initially created diagram-influenced form.³

I asked Paul about his concept of the *Living Set*:

Many sets of music are purposefully created as a closed, “complete” entity, but I see them as a view into how a composer evolves: A living set is a group of pieces that evolves with the composer. By letting myself grow as a composer through common themes, I can see and showcase my own growth as an artist.⁴

Program Notes

Paul John Rudoi’s *Runowamae* uses syncopated rhythms, sustained vowels and overtone singing to create an interesting and engaging soundscape. *Runowamae* is the second composition in his NONSENSE living set. When asked about the ideas that connect the pieces in NONSENSE, Rudoi responds:

The only common thread is nonsense, literally. I begin each piece by finding a grouping of syllables that roll off the tongue a certain way, and I expand the way they interact with one another into a work. That and I wanted to be able to have fun writing... I was taking myself and my work a little too seriously four years ago and wrote *Miniyama Nayo* as a response to that. I’ve been hooked on fun/quirky ever since.⁵

Rudoi’s concept of the *Living Set* is a response to more traditional song sets or cycles:

Many sets of music are purposefully created as a closed, “complete” entity, but I see them as a view into how a composer evolves: A living set is a group of pieces that evolves with the composer. By letting myself grow as a composer through common themes, I can see and showcase my own growth as an artist.⁶

Analysis

Tonal Center: Mainly G

Meter: 4/4

Form: Sectional

³ Rudoi, Paul John. *Paul John Rudoi*. Consortio. Web. 2019. Accessed 25 June 2019. [<https://consortio.io/pauljohnrudoi>]

⁴ Rudoi, Paul John. Email to Elizabeth Pauly, 26 June 2019.

⁵ Rudoi, Paul John. Email to Elizabeth Pauly, 26 June 2019.

⁶ Rudoi, Paul John. Email to Elizabeth Pauly, 26 June 2019.

SECTION	MEASURE	EVENT AND SCORING
1	1-4	Rhythmic ostinato with hand claps
2	5-8	Tenor enters on a sustained G, modifying the vowels used to create overtones
3	9-11	SAT sing in three part harmony; the melody is sustained and lyrical in a three measure phrase; rhythmic interest is added by pitch movement at different times in different voices, the pitch changes are often syncopated – this section is repeated
4	12-15	All voices sing on a sustained G, modifying the vowels used to create overtones
5	16-21	All parts sing in four part harmony; as in 9-11, the melody sustained and lyrical; three measure phrase; rhythmic interest is added by pitch movement at different times in different voices, the pitch changes are often syncopated; 16-18 are identical to 19-21, aside from the first pitch in the bass line
6	22-27	Mostly new musical material, and unlike previous melodic sections, there are two contrasting three measure phrases; At 25-27, the altos sing the part that the sopranos had at 16-18; 25-27 – basses sing the part they had at 19-21
7	28-31	All voices sing on a sustained C, modifying the vowels used to create overtones
8	32-37	This section is a layering of three measure ostinati – from 32-33 parts are added, beginning with soprano, then adding a/t/b in that order; 34-37 parts are subtracted in the opposite order, claps out first, then b/a/t
9	38-41	ST sing G, AB sing C – open fifths; modifying the vowels used to create overtones
10	42-44	like 9-11, with the addition of the bass on a pedal “C”
11	45-end	This section is predominantly new musical material, consisting of three three-measure phrases; a few fragments from previous sections are used